

Vlasta Jalusic:

Gender and Political Transformation in Central and Eastern Europe ¹

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One of the most characteristic phenomena in post-1989 Central and Eastern Europe is the factual absence of women from the alleged "place" of politics. Yet there is one, for the political thought, even more symptomatic feature to be noticed: it is the absence of the topic of gender and gender politics from the theories of transformation. This absence might be seen as a symptom of mainstream theories of transformation, which as some authors have noticed, either overlook or consciously neglect this question (Sauer, Kreisky, 1996). As a consequence, the questions of gender roles, family relationships, socialization etc. are seen as "natural" questions which do not have political meaning and consequences and also do not fit into an analysis of politics and the political ². On the other hand, this reinforces the notion of politics as mainly institutional arrangements and elite matters. My hypothesis here is that if we pay attention to the question of gender, we might make a move towards a different, more accurate analysis and vision of politics. In this paper, I will try to answer the question which understanding of the transformation of politics we can gain if we consider the question of gender as a politically relevant element within the transformation process in Central and Eastern Europe, especially from the perspective of new state/statehood and (active) citizenship.

I shall explore this question in three parts:

- i) I would like to discuss two understandings and interpretations of political transformation in Central and Eastern Europe;
- ii) Shall speak about some gendered consequences of prevailing, that is, liberal, notion of political transformation; and iii) I will try to address the question of why feminists in Central and Eastern Europe should take greater interest in active citizenship as a political concept.

The two understandings of the political transformation

I would like to differentiate between two possible understandings of political transformation. The first and prevailing understanding of political transformation is one, which regards this transformation as, above all else, work of political elite. At least at the beginning of 90's the dominant current among social scientists and political ideologists of post-communism regarded political transformation in Central and Eastern Europe as a primarily post-1989 severance from the old, undemocratic system and issuing of the new, democratic model. But, what exactly does this mean? Firstly, there was the narrow normative understanding of democracy: namely, the Schumpeterian "democratic method" conceived as competitive representative system coupled with a market economy - the so-called marketization and democratization. Most transformation theories and practices understood post-socialist transformation as a repetition and consolidation of an improved model. The real source of this transformation, however, was the oppositional and

dissident activism from the time *prior to* 1989; namely, the social movements *and* initiatives, civil society groups *and* activities, that were the very core of the velvet revolutions were seen instead as something *pre-political*. From the socialist period, dissident and civil society activities were, within this image and interpretation of the "new" in Central and Eastern Europe perceived as merely preparatory for the system in which politics would later be conducted in a sober, professional and earnest manner and would play a very small role in a majority of citizen's lives.

Similarly, and perhaps paradoxically, to this understanding of the so-called "transformation", which had had a considerable ideological force, very little has changed. In fact, the image of politics and the attitudes towards it in post-socialist period differ very little from prevalent attitudes during the socialist period. The concept of anti-politics as an oppositional activity within socialism, that is, as a non-political, moral activity supported the presumption that there was "too much politics" and "too much state" in the former system³. In a way, this anti-political stance was an answer to the idea that, under socialism, politics was a dirty, corrupt matter, and similarly, so was the state. Those wanting to retain moral should then not have been involved in this kind of politics; that is, they were to remain outside this sphere as special moral power. It was this reason that the concept of the 'new' demanded a de-politicization of people's lives; in other words, as little politics as possible and as little state. This concept of "as little politics as possible" contributed a lot to the perception of politics in the post-socialist period and to the anti-institutionalist sentiment. Furthermore, this concept still represents the very core of the liberal democratic attitude towards politics as above all "a vocation" in the Weberian sense.

Hence, a general characteristics of "post-totalitarian systems" was not only an obvious trend towards an apolitical attitude and "possessive individualism", one which legitimizes itself as a need for "depolitization" but also a widespread conviction in the circles of political and scientific (including social sciences) elite that politics must be radically marginalized - as little state and as few institutions as possible.

Politics, if we speak in the dominant sociological jargon of my country, should form a kind of "social sub-system" ideally having a very limited scope and influence within post-socialist systems. The role of politics and state may be stronger at the beginning of the period of social and economic "transition"; that is, in the period of reform introduction, primarily because of the intense legislative period and systematic changes (Offe, 1991). Later on, this role shall be reduced.

This pattern of thinking came from essentially two sources: The first source was the aforementioned experience with the quasi "over-politicized" communist/socialist systems and the particular dominant picture of politics within them. The second source was, linked to this experience, the post-modern notion of politics as so to speak potentially "totalitarian" or, if not totalitarian, then at least a totalizing activity, connected with the state and its potentially violent and monstrous institutions, those which contain a potential for running out of control. Both sources - past experience and the theoretical notion did successfully keep company with the ever-present spontaneous ideology of liberalism and were the most fruitful field for strengthening its idea of a supposedly "minimal state" within the new system.

This idea about the possibility of the minimal state within the transitional circumstances is, of course, pure ideology: the opposite is the reality⁴. The post-socialist liberal state interferes strongly in people's lives through its reforms. Despite the liberal desire and claim not to have a distributive state, the transitional state works exactly in this way: at least in regards to its first

function of redistributing property anew. In most Central and Eastern European countries, the (more or less liberal) transitional state had to enormously increase its state bureaucracy due to the demands of foreign affairs, entrance into the EU, Euroatlantic integration and new border and national security politics.

The belief that too much politics is dangerous and that freedom does not lie in politics but outside it is nothing new. Following Hannah Arendt, who effectively criticized this belief, we could say that it owes its origins to both individual and group experiences with institutions running out of control and vampirized states. The twentieth century as an age of totalitarianism (Nazism and Stalinism) and an age where the weapons of mass destruction have been developed can only uphold this notion, especially in the so-called post-totalitarian states of Eastern Europe ⁵. Yet, as aforementioned, the opinion that politics is something contrary to freedom is also deeply rooted in one symptomatic theoretical belief. It is the liberal view that both politics and the political are only about power, which is obviously, intrinsically connected to violence and force (either directly or indirectly, as a means to avoid violence). Politics and power are (in this view) either directly or structurally violent and violence is regarded as the underpinning of political institutions and state. With mentioning this theoretical belief I would like to address the concept arising from the modern theory of the state sovereignty which produces a "technological" vision of politics as above all technique of government, as "making" of politics. It is the notion that comes from a Hobbesian understanding of the state-power principle as an "exchange" relationship between the state and the people: that is, the state is established as some kind of a "one man band" to render security to its subjects who should, in turn, above all else, obey. In this relationship, the citizen gives up a part of his or her autonomy and thus delegates it to the state (i.e. Leviathan) in order to be protected against "the autonomous other" and to live his or her very private life peacefully, and to be free from various constraints. Furthermore, the main function of the state and politics is above all "to protect" the private lives of atomized citizens against various violations; it is *not* to render, harbour or even create a space for the new political agents and their initiatives.

There was one additional distinguishing hope invested into the process of establishing the post-socialist democratic system and state. Namely; the majority of the population no longer wanted to be involved in "politics", but rather to be free from the activity forced upon them under the former system. The democratic state and its institutions were assumed to somehow "work" automatically for the individual. After introducing effective democratic institutions, the hope was that one could have some rest from the involvement with the state and political sphere. Many people thought "the game" (i.e. velvet revolution) is over and we can go home now! ⁶ Let me present one illustrative example. Prior to the second elections in 1992 one Slovene journalist was asked on TV what he thought about the recent developments in Slovenia (connected to the democratic elections). He replied that he expected "normalization" soon, in the sense that people would no longer be disturbed by politics and would instead be left "to live their own lives". Freedom was therefore understood as something existing in private sphere, not in the public agency; thus in a traditional liberal manner, as something negative and belonging to the non-political realm. However, if one moves towards the assumption that all freedom lies in the private sphere, it could be easily concluded that equality is no longer necessary. There are so many faces of private freedom as there are individuals and, therefore, the concept of difference (and differentiation) could prevail over the importance of equality.

Such expectation of abolishing of politics in its widest sense (i.e. as active engagement for public matters) is a very powerful basis for the liberal ideology and for the concept of a strong political

elite; that is, one which is both obliged and able to create an effective political and economic system without either the majority or minority groups interfering into their "business" too much. This notion supports the exclusive; anti-participatory interpretation of politics and state. Within the interests of the political elite in Central and Eastern Europe this occurred as the following desire: The less people interfere in our (political) matters, the better - all the more successfully we can execute our ideas. Such an interpretation of the liberal state and politics as, so to speak, avant-garde institutions, marching forward towards democracy was best described in one paper by Czech sociologist Martin Potucek. Describing the former Czech prime minister Vaclav Klaus' attitude towards politics (his "liberalism without adjectives") he writes:

"Let us (me and my party) make it: we are (I am) well prepared for such a task as economists and politicians (as an economist and politician). Please, don't interfere in what we are (I am) doing, we know (I know) best what to do" (Potucek, 1998:8).

Hence it is no wonder that the social sciences have had such enormous interest in the study of the new post-socialist elite as privileged players in the post-socialist reality. The elite played the major role in transformation, adoption, preparation and building of the democratic state apparatus. After consolidation state and politics would start functioning automatically and their role would then diminish. The agency was assigned to the activities of professional politicians, political parties, the state apparatus and experts in different areas such as economists, diplomacy and the empirical social sciences. Also, too much interference from people was seen as potentially destructive.

This fear of having too many players in the political game was typical for the designers of the new state and institutions. One Slovene social scientist addressed the central problem of policy planning in the transitional state in the following terms: "We have to do with the big expectations and excessive demands of different social groups which have got - under democratic condition - big scope of political action, articulation and political pressure" (Adam, 1994). Here it seems that demands of active individuals can in fact hinder the automatic and strife-less development of the transformation process. The state apparatus and politics are considered as above all means for change; that is, as a huge, transitional political machine which should operate without tensions and without disturbance from unexpected political players.

It was this line of thinking that enabled the Hobbes-Schmittian concept of re-establishing of the modern state(s) as political unit(s) to prevail in post-1989 Central and Eastern Europe⁷. As a truly new political foundation the work of the political elite after 1989 was recognized and not the oppositional activities which preceded this "making" of the state. The transformation was understood as something which had to be executed in the manner of a "one man band", in order to, above all else, avoid the numerous actors which have been present in the opposition movements or which may occur in the opening of a new political space. Such a new founding also demanded significant degree of homogeneity, and not too many differences, among the potential consumers of the new democratic institutions.

Thus "transition" to democracy in Central and Eastern Europe finally meant an introduction of the proven models of nation-state and mass democracy; that is, another adaptation of this, somewhat antiquated but, until present still the only functioning mechanism for decision-making within the large political unit at the so called (and ever-paradoxical) national level. The main principle behind introducing of this model was democratic inclusion on the one hand but, also exclusion from the national body on the other. There was potential for some groups in Central and Eastern Europe

an countries to lack participation in citizen's rights only by "accident", so to speak, due to the mere narrower definition of the citizen - as in the case of the Baltic states, for example. However, this exclusion did not have to be direct. At the beginning of transformation, enemies of the new Eastern European democracies were able to be (and were quite readily) constructed - enemies that ought to be excluded hierarchically from the new system; namely ex-communists and old forces first, followed by foreigners, the "others" and the different. Some examples of these different attempts of exclusion were: i) lustration laws or citizenship laws in some states; ii) attempts to ban abortion in the others; ⁸ iii) different types of discrimination against already politically and socially deprived ethnic groups, such as the Roma for example and iv) the rise of exclusive ethnic parties and movements etc. The new political units tried to exclude everything and everyone who could endanger the urgent unity of the new. One should probably seriously rethink the fact that the most successful and fast transforming transitional states are the most ethnically, religious and culturally homogeneous - e.g. Czech Republic, Slovenia, Hungary and Poland.

While I am fully aware that this assumption of homogeneity might sound like a politically incorrect hypothesis, what I am trying to present here are, in my opinion, the dominant features connected to the reappearance of democratic system and its nation-state framework. In one of his recent analysis of the Central and Eastern Europe an countries Jacques Rupnik writes that the "return of democracy in 1989 was inseparable form the return of the nation" (Rupnik, 1999: 61) and also that "one reason why Central Europe has been less troubled by the national question than Southeastern Europe is that today its populations are more homogeneous (and where they are not, as in Slovakia, is precisely where the transition has been least successful)" ⁹.

Yet, if the main similarity among the Eastern and Central European countries was the attempt to build upon homogeneity, what were then the varieties within this "model" of state foundation; especially, if this model was about the state functioning as a technological power, as a kind of power machine that is (at least in the beginning) effective and decisive enough only if it functions as a "one man band" undisturbed by the "others"? In my opinion, the varieties appeared within the following domains:

First, regarding the quantity of the differences amongst the players, let us say "identities", each transitional elite was ready to "use" or to tolerate at the very act of foundation and later, within the functioning system.

Second, considering the amount of real violence, which erupted at foundations. This was the question of more liberal or more populist - ethnic orientation, peace or war - and in this case as well, it depended on the more or less (ethnically) homogeneous state space ¹⁰. There were states which were formed as a result of war or became immediately involved in the war; namely, in the Yugoslav case, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the rump Yugoslavia; and there were states which were formed peacefully such as the Czech and the Slovak case and Baltic states. In this sense, the "transition" and the formation of democracy in this part of Europe, in fact, represents a kind of "delayed modernization" (as it is popularly called by numerous sociologists it); especially from the perspective of the so called nation-state-building (here again, it is necessary to mention the paradox that the state seems to be obsolete from the liberal point of view). This process does not reveal itself only through the majority's wish to capture the western economies but also through the emphasized perception of politics and state as above all successful machine for the fast and effective decision-making concerning the economic system and the technology of government.

The second understanding of political transformation

Now, I would like to turn to the other potential understanding of political transformation. This other understanding of "political transformation", - let us say participatory - witnessed active citizenship being withered away through the described process after 1989. The oppositional activities within communist systems, as far as they had a different character from the later "introduction of democracy", created a hope that within Eastern Europe a kind of a "new civic state model" or a new citizenship model could be introduced. This hope to create a model which would take into account the failures of Western liberal democracies was present in both the East and the West during the 80's. Hopes were invested not only by members of opposition such as Vaclav Havel¹¹ but also by the left Western European intelligentsia who were inclined towards new social movements and aware of the nature of liberalism and its discontents¹² It was the understanding that was formed through the experience of dissident and civil society movements in Eastern Europe. Unfortunately, their understanding of politics was expressed in anti-political categories and, therefore, created the adequate playground for its distorted interpretation of the political transformation.

My thesis is that, in the foundation of the post-socialist states, the already existing new political possibilities and spaces which were formed by oppositional, dissident movements within socialism were suppressed - and, so to speak, politically forgotten¹³. In this sense, there was a special kind of social and political amnesia at work in the post-socialist states. This amnesia is, at present, most obviously represented in the aversion against politics as public engagement. On the one hand, a large class of apolitical individuals is emerging and on the other, an increase of populist impulses. This is especially evident after some years of experience with the new-born political elite in that there exists the feeling, as Schopflin put it, a "strong sense" that "all politics was about personal gain and nothing else, which then led people to conclude that there was nothing to be gained from political participation" (Schopflin, 1993:277, see Regulska, 1997:72).

This other model, I mention, this other explanation and understanding, of the political transformation would be some sort of the Arendtian interpretation of the state and citizenship: that is, the new state and new, democratic, political community emerges out of the collective political action which is neither "exclusive" nor enemy-oriented. It is an institutional result of a particular and specific cooperation for the new foundation of favorable circumstances¹⁴ - it means creating and opening new political spaces, new identities and also institutionalizing them. However: this is not the last act; we cannot just "go home" after this. One very important element in this "model" or perhaps, understanding is that the active component should not disappear, become redundant or, as Hannah Arendt put it, in the case of the American political life, "the lost treasure" (Arendt, 1987: 215 ff). The active citizenship should remain a constitutive part of the transformed politics. The real political transformation means a constant inclusion of new topics, spaces and players. I think that the systematic exclusion of political innovation and of the participatory model will always be punished by the deterioration of freedom again....

Gendered consequences of prevailing (liberal) notion of political transformation

The very first gendered consequence of the prevailing notion of politics was an attempt to reconstruct a traditional liberal division between the private and public spheres. This development took place in spite of the fact that the private spaces have played an important, even constitutive role in opening up the new political spaces, and moreover, the private domain has become, at least for a short period, the "proper" locale for politics. Furthermore, it was possible to overlook

the fact that the private-public divide could no longer function in the traditional sense because socialism executed modernization without feminism, without feminist movement. This reaffirmation of the traditional liberal division between public and private influenced the lack of representation and participation of women within the new representative model.

Let me clarify this: within the oppositional movements in the socialist period, a certain shift in the public - private relationship occurred. The private became, for a time, a space of relative freedom and innovative discourse, that is, a space for new political agendas. Women have, without question, taken part within this change. However, since the "turning point" in 1989 which gave birth to the new public space and liberal democratic institutions - the areas which have been the true source of the velvet revolutions (more or less private or semi-public places) were again de-politicized or even became spheres of constraint (e.g. the church in Poland). In some ex-socialist states, these spaces were also sources of the first feminist or women-only initiative (as was in the case of former Yugoslavia, Poland and the GDR). With the "turn" towards the new system, men have left for the political area to the "place of power" (i.e. new institutions) while women have been excluded from this area and reside somewhere within the social realm. The private, although being transformed and a source of the new power, did not count any more.

Women were rapidly affected by the restructuring of the public-private sphere, by marketization, liberalization and by their additional preoccupation with the caring work - all this occurring without introducing of new social policies. Crucial social provisions were sometimes abolished. Social and personal conflicts caused by the transitional processes were mostly "mediated" within families. Women, therefore, were not only directly affected by the new situation, that is by their own unemployment and lack of security, but also through changes and additional conflicts within the family life due to the uncertain situation experienced by their partners: unchanged gender relations and family are, as Hana Havelkova put it, ignored but assumed within the transitional process and its ideology (Havelkova, 1996).

The indirect exclusion of women was also caused by transitional automatism itself, for example, by excessive legislation. There was no special "male conspiracy" needed to miss the nuances and the seemingly minor details that related to the position of women. During the 1990 - 1994 reform period, some four to five hundred laws needed to be changed - for example, in Slovenia, the figure stood at 450 and in Hungary, 432.

The processes of building new state institutions and integration into European institutions had their specific consequences as well: higher budgets for sectors such as national security, military and foreign politics which, at the same time, meant minimizing the role of the state in the area of social provision. This caused the new phenomenon that I call "redundancy"; that is, redundancy of a whole strata of people who became unemployed or otherwise suffered from unstable situations and were not able to "adapt" themselves to market and social competition. .

Due to the fact that social issues dominated during the socialist period, a new political agenda could easily be formed; an agenda where only important economic questions or general, "gender neutral" common issues such as human rights and democratic order (in other words, those pertaining to a representative democracy) were discussed. Women's issues, even if they existed, were either not allowed to be defined or were rarely defined as "relevant political issues or ones to be resolved." (Regulska, 1997: 71). One could easily insist that 'women's issues' such as "childcare, health, decreasing employment opportunities for women and cultural activities had to wait until the critical issues of nationhood were resolved" (ibid).

Due to the fact that politics was understood in a narrow institutional sense, and that agency in transitional societies was predominantly prescribed as the activity of a professional, political and economic elite, which was, from the very beginning, formed by men, women had almost no real chance of entering this professional sphere of public engagement. The fact that female representation in Central and Eastern European parliaments is between 7 and 15 % is indicative of this. Moreover, in the nineties, what women in most Central and Eastern European countries did instead was form and work in many voluntary, non-governmental women's organizations. It was proven that such a mode of organizing was less attractive for men than for women. However unwelcome they were, it was obvious that women preferred engaging in such alternative spaces. They could act more freely than within traditional institutions, have more initiative, autonomy, a different power structure and thus, more freedom within political action. They could use different political and social patterns and did not have to be as efficient as in the formal political arena. Public influence of their various activities was small. Their work was not perceived as "real", earnest politics. However, since women missed the boat in being given their portion of power they could, at least in the beginning, hardly construct anything apart from negative, defensive topics such as defending abortion. Topics such as "attention ...to the need for equal rights for women and men in political life and the principle of representation of both sexes in all public institutions" did not emerge until later (Polish Act Concerning Equal status of Women and Men, prepared by Polish feminists, 1996).

When more powerful initiatives, such as demanding equal political representation, were launched by individuals and groups, they were usually described by liberals from the left and right alike as non legitimate initiatives. They were viewed as matters that either belonged to the past or that could be very dangerous for the future.

Let me cite a few cases. In Poland, a strong group of deputies from the Peasant party labeled a proposal for equal political representation an "antidemocratic proposition". Meanwhile the Freedom Union maintained that there "would not be enough active women to fill the 40 threshold". Politically privileged women upheld quota as an unnecessary or "crazy idea" (for example, Prime Minister Suchocka) or argued that "it is not a stereotype but the nature that results in women's and men's different roles" (see Regulska, 1994). Female representatives in the Czech parliament who were eventually faced with positive measures, such as quota, to increase the political participation of women used the following expressions to describe these ideas: "egalitarian fundamentalism", "nonsense" or even as a "racism"(see Vodral'ka, 1996: 11). The former Czech Prime Minister, V. Klaus, stated in 1996 that introducing promotion mechanisms, such as quota, to help women enter politics could even be seen as an "insult for women" (Vodral'ka, 1996: 12).

It is obvious that women, in an attempt to put certain issues such as representation on the political agenda had had to use quite complicated and imaginative tactics. In a way, they are still forced to behave like the former socialist opposition. They try to form a parallel system, in other words, a separate space where equality is self-evident and from where they can influence institutional politics. As a result of this, women in NGO's in Central and Eastern Europe have the potential to bring the 'new' into politics, namely, new actors and new topics, and consequently transform the narrow, fixed notion of the political in this post socialist era. This might also be the reason why they regard civil society as an important, if not the only, sphere for change.

The concept of active citizenship

Bearing in mind the general amnesia of mainstream politics towards different pre-existing political practices and also the latter's exclusion from today's political culture, I would like to readress to the last point and in conclusion, put the following question:

Why should the politically interested public, and especially feminists, in Central and Eastern Europe, have the strongest interest in renewing the question of active citizenship on the political agenda? Why should this concept be in the interest of feminists or those wishing to rethink the traditional liberal-democratic concept, which has prevailed in this region?

My main thesis here is that we, in Eastern and Central Europe either already are or, soon will be faced with very similar problems and systematic legitimacy crisis as the most liberal-democratic states of the Western world and perhaps, most particularly, the American model. This crisis will probably arise from the disenchantment with the newest capitalist legacy and liberal-democratic institutions. Mary G. Dietz wrote some time ago about the problems of American citizenship:

"How we understand ourselves as citizens has little to do with the democratic norms and values (i.e. positive liberties) and it is probably fair to say that most Americans do not think of citizenship in this way at all. We seem hypnotized by a liberal conception of citizenship as rights, an unremitting consumerism that we confuse with freedom, and a capitalist ethic that we take as our capitalist identity" (Dietz, 1998: 392; brackets mine).

I think that the same could be said about the contemporary Central and Eastern Europe situation and civic spirit.

It is due to rapid social and historical amnesia that one has not succeeded in translating the former civic practices into active form of freedom - in a sense that these practices have not been at least partly institutionalized. I have already mentioned that feminist initiatives are somehow repeating the experience of active dissident engagement within socialism through building a more open civil society. Some questions I would like to close with are: i) is it possible to revitalize the old experience and politicize the new practices of women's groups and what methods could be used for such revitalization and politicization?; and ii) how should the concept of active citizenship look within the post-socialist countries? I think there is immense potential here, especially within the large public activities. But the activities of new and different independent groups have not been politicized enough. However as M. Dietz put it almost ten years ago, "feminist political practice will not in some automatic way become an inspiration for a new citizenship" (Dietz, 1998: 393). There will be a lot of work needed in the "land of liberalism".

Inasmuch as the concept of freedom of liberal capitalism as a model of "citizenship" prevailed, the concept of active citizenship is of utmost importance here. A parallel could possibly be drawn between the experience of the velvet revolutions and the American revolution with its tradition of strong citizen initiative, rich democratic practices and agency - these, however, according to the opinion of some authors, have been lost and since dissolved in the "liberal-capitalist citizenship" of today. Some authors (like M. Dietz and S. Wolin) even speak about "two bodies" within the historic "body of the people" in the U.S.A. They suggest that there is one body of democratic practices and another body, "informed by an anti-democratic political economy" (Dietz, 1988: 392); and proceed to claim that the truly democratic practices have nearly ceased to be a part of politics in the U.S., that they exist only on the margins and a memory to them seems to have

vanished from the collective imagination (Dietz, *ibid.*). This is precisely what Hannah Arendt was describing as a vanishing of freedom and also vanishing of politics (see Arendt 1987, 1993). Therefore, when I speak about the collective amnesia regarding former civic engagement in Eastern and Central Europe, I am referring to similar phenomena as described by Arendt, Wolin and Dietz.

If we wish to speak about the question of participation, that is, in other words, active citizenship in Central and Eastern Europe, we should retain at least a part of the memory of past civic engagement, not as anti-politics but as genuine politics, and also restore it with the new practices. Yet, the question of whether we shall not address these practices as political will be of the utmost importance.

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Footnotes

1 This paper was supported by the Research Support Scheme of the OSI/HESP, grant No: 1465/1997.

2 One of the recent comparative analyses of transformation and gender politics in Latin America and Central and Eastern Europe (paying a special attention to these characteristics) was written by Jacqueline and Wolchik (1998).

3 For more developed exposition of the concept of society vs. authority and the so-called anti-political concept of the civil society see Marody, 1993 and Jalusic, 1998.

4 Some important analyses of transformation insist that the state plays the decisive role in the process of democratization. Linz and Stephan, for example, argue the following: "Democracy is a form of governance of a state. Thus, no modern polity can become democratically consolidated unless it is first a state. Therefore the inexistence of a state of such intense lack of identification with the state... raises fundamental and often unsolvable problems" (Linz/Stephan 1996: 7 and 17, underlined by V.J.).

5 Arendt did not speak so much about the disenchantment with politics in the 20th century but above all about the fact that politics, confronted with its inner possibility of destruction of the whole communities and even of the whole world, could be seen as questionable in itself (Arendt, 1993, pp. 28-35).

6 After writing the outline of this paper I found the same remark in the article of Mary G. Dietz. The remark is connected to her assessment of the relationship between liberal feminist politics and the question of citizenship. She claims the following: "A feminist commitment to democratic citizenship should not be confused with either the liberal politics of pressure groups and representative government or the idea that after victory or defeat on an issue, the game is over and we can 'go home'." (Dietz, 1998: 391).

7 On the one hand, within the Hobbes-Schmittian concept that I have in mind, the Hobbesian concept of the state functions as an "exchange" between individuals and state, whereby the individuals give away the active part of their autonomy and render it to the state which, in turn, protects them against others. On the other hand, I look towards Carl Schmitt's position that politics, the modern state and its political system have their origin in the friend-foe relationship, which is the condition for democratic homogeneity and for inclusion of some individuals into the political unit and exclusion of the others. Thus, the condition for "admission" to citizenship for the majority is the original act of exclusion of "others". (Hobbes, 1991, Schmitt, 1963)

8 The attempts to restrict access to abortion were made in many if not in all post-communist countries (probably with the exception of the Czech republic). This was one of their typical transitional common features. The Polish case was the most blatant. In taking away the right to decide over their own bodies, women were deprived of one of the very conditions of equality and, through this, also of the potential of being equal citizens. The incident shows that even the "second sex" can be seen as a potential enemy, as dangerous, if not behaving within the supposed norms of a homogeneous national body.

9 Then he adds an even more unpleasant conclusion: "In short, in Central Europe "ethnic cleansing" was completed half a century ago, whereas in the Balkans the process of "homogeneous" nation-state building is still under way" (Rupnik, 1996: 61).

10 I am not speaking here about whether this was good or bad. It is just a fact that want to address.

11 See Vaclav Havel's text "The Politics of Antipolitics" where he pays attention to failures in both communist and capitalist systems (Havel, 1988).

12 Theories of civil society and new social movements flourished among many Western social theorists like Claus Offe, John Keane, Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe. The "easternized" Gramscian concept of solidarity and hegemony within civil society (concepts influenced by A. Michnik's idea of "new evolutionism", Havel's and Konrad's Anti-politics and civil society) became a very important source of identification for the Western post-communist left.

13 See Jalusic, 1998.

14 Arendt developed this interpretation especially in her work *On Revolution* (Arendt, 1987)